

C!N

946



News of any sort of *Spirit* project would be quite welcome—but DC's revelation that they have three different projects in the works—two new, one reprint—involving the late Will Eisner's all-too-human masked hero was a double-dose of good news!

First up in December is a project designed to introduce the character to DC audiences: a *Batman/The Spirit* stand-alone special written by Jeph Loeb and drawn by Darwyn Cooke, which will be joined by *The Best Of The Spirit*, an affordably-priced trade paperback collecting almost two dozen stories by Eisner, with a new introduction by Neil Gaiman.

Soon afterwards, Darwyn Cooke continues his Spirit-ed comics work with an all-new ongoing series that he will both write and illustrate.

"I can honestly say that this came completely out of left field for me," Cooke told *Comic Shop News*'s Matt Brady. "New Frontier had given me an opportunity to sort of 'sing my song' with the DC Universe, and I had planned on doing my issue of *Solo* for Mark Chiarello and then heading in a new direction. I was actually starting work on my creator-owned original graphic novel when Mark called up, and asked if I'd be interested in a *Spirit* ongoing. I was floored by the proposition... I've been a Spirit fan since age fourteen and I can honestly say that he was the only licensed character in the industry that could have got me to change course. It was kinda Al Pacino, y'know — Just when I think I'm out, they pull me back in!!!"

The wheels were set in motion when DC's Paul Levitz, Dan DiDio, and long-time Will Eisner friend and associate Denis Kitchen began discussing a *Spirit* monthly—the purpose of which, DiDio explained, was to "introduce the character to a new audience."

"They decided a crossover with Batman was a natural, and would allow the broadest base of readers a chance to see what a great world the Spirit lives in," Cooke explained.

Both projects were in development before Eisner's passing in January; legendary creator knew and approved of the idea, though Cooke didn't have the good fortune to work with Eisner on the projects directly. "Before his surgery, Will had wanted all of his affairs in order, and DC and Denis finalized the deal for the project," explained Cooke. "We all know the heartbreaking conclusion of that story. We lost the master builder. The comic book language that we all work with, the very nature of this artform as I employ it, was created by a quadrangle of men. Joe Simon, Jack Kirby, Harvey Kurtzman and the greatest storyteller of all... Will Eisner.

"It breaks my heart, but we had no communication over the project. I know I'd feel stronger about doing this if he was here to guide me." However, Cooke will be working with one man whose knowledge of all things Spirit is second only to Eisner's. "The esteemed Denis Kitchen, Will's longtime friend and associate, is the estate's representative, and in that regard, I'm truly blessed. If ever there was someone who could shepherd this project, it is Denis. Denis will be with us every step of the way, and so far, we seem to be in concert regarding the direction we're heading in."

Cooke is aware that he's taken on quite a challenge. "I'm feeling exhilaration, fear, excitement, anxiety, and some naked terror. I cope with interpretive dance and by firing endless rounds of high caliber ammunition into the valley behind my place."

While he's handling art for both projects, he'll be working with a Jeph Loeb on *Batman/The Spirit*, while he's working solo on the monthly. Cooke explained how this might affect

"But the fun of the story is seeing Commissioner Dolan and Commissioner Gordon — both men who have to work these 'outlaws.' It's Ellen Dolan and Barbara Gordon—essentially the daughters who act like mother figures to their single parent fathers. It's P'Gell and Selina—maybe the two hottest women ever to be in comics. Cooke came up with this story for those femme fatales that just rocks the house..."

"The story is about two men who are working on the same case, but don't realize the other one is there. There are so many villains running around—I'm not going to spoil why—but it's really the first thing Cooke and I came up with together. He had this idea and just put a little gravity on it and poof — it works!"

Cooke enumerated his two primary goals for the project. "One—preserve and if humanly possible, enrich the core essence of the Spirit. Give long-time readers a contemporary look at the magic that has held them for decades, and introduce a new generation to the irresistible pull of this rich human drama. Action, crime, romance, humor and pathos will all be generously employed in the 'spirit' of the original strip. There'll be no deconstruction and every issue will be a story unto itself, making every issue an ideal jumping-on point. Every story will try to add and hopefully strengthen the essence of Eisner's characters and vision.

"The second goal is to produce a work that reaffirms *The Spirit* as the strip for graphic innovation that enhances storytelling. This second mandate is, I believe, the one to be artistically important. While we cleave to Eisner's vision and world-view for Central City, we should be equally mindful of his vision that contemporary storytelling techniques be continually introduced to engage the reader in fresh and appropriate ways. I believe that this would have been very impor-

DC Gets the Spirit



his artistic approach to each book. "With *Batman/The Spirit*, my longtime collaborator J. Bone will be inking and the story is big, exciting and colorful," Cooke explained. "There is a certain lightness of tone that comes from the contrast between these two characters and the sparks that creates. I'll be penciling and inking *The Spirit* monthly, and it'll be very much the type of work I'm known for; probably closer to *Catwoman* and *Slam Bradley* in feel than to *New Frontier*."

Loeb, who is writing the *Batman/Spirit* crossover, said that landing the assignment was largely the result of being "at the right place right time. It all happened very quickly. And sadly, it was all around when Eisner died, thus, so much of what I would have liked to have done I would have loved to have done with his direct input. But, the great part about Will was that he didn't pull any punches when he spoke to his friends. And people like Dennis Kitchen and Paul Levitz knew him very, very well and have an excellent sense of what Will believed *The Spirit* to be.

"When you add up the things—my love for *The Spirit*, my work on *Batman* and how much I wanted to work with Cooke—I think it was kind of no brainer when Mark [Chiarello, editor of the project] asked me to come on board."

While he's the writer, he sees the book as a collaboration between Loeb and Cook. "These story we have comes out of a series of conversations we had about both men. The great thing is that we see *The Spirit* and *Batman* exactly the same way. The characters themselves are very different men. Simply put: Spirit funny. Batman not funny. And the Spirit isn't funny like Spidey cracking jokes. He's just clever — like Will was — about how odd life is..."

tant to Will, and I feel it is the key to avoiding a simple homage.

"Graphics have always played a key role in *The Spirit*. In order to avoid simply copying Eisner's trademark logo treatments we would have a wealth of new methods and techniques at our disposal to carry the artistic intent of his graphics forward."

One way that Cooke will accomplish this is to move the Spirit's exploits to a contemporary setting. "At first glance, it may seem *The Spirit* should ideally take place in the 'never-where' of '40's post-war Central City, and could make for a brilliant monthly," Cooke explained. "But I think that the real opportunities lie in placing the strip in the modern world."

"At its heart we find a strip about people, and life in the city. Story and character are king. They are timeless stories that resonate regardless of the era. By placing it in the modern world, we are far more likely to be embraced by new readers. Instead of echoing Eisner's untappable stories, fifty years of social growth have provided a host of new characters and situations to explore, through the thematic constructs Eisner has created.

"Placing Denny Colt in the modern world is an updating of sorts, and there will be a number of new femmes, criminals and loveable losers to go with the incredible cast Will created," Cooke said. "However, I don't see any need for 'tweaking' the concept. Will's genius has created a strip where I can explore the human condition from virtually any conceivable angle. I couldn't ask for more."

by Matt Brady & Cliff Biggers

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Waid Makes His Mark at DC

Mark Waid, an acclaimed writer whose body of work includes high-profile projects for DC, Image/Top Cow, Marvel, and the late CrossGen, has found a place to hang his hat. For the next two years, Waid will work almost exclusively for DC, where he is currently writing *Legion of Super-Heroes* and will soon launch the new team-up title *The Brave & the Bold*.

DC Executive Editor Dan DiDio knew that Waid was someone he wanted on the DC team. "He's done such a great job in re-imagining the Legion of Super-Heroes—he did everything that we hoped to do with the title and the property," DiDio said. "I think that's what his greatest strength is—he understands the history of our characters so well, and isn't afraid to make the changes necessary in order to make the characters work for a contemporary or new audience."

"My hope is with what he's done now is that not only has he been able to reinvigorate the *Legion of Super-Heroes* franchise, but with something like *Brave and the Bold*, we're going to have an exciting book that's a companion book to *Superman/Batman* that's able to tell the big, broad, exciting stories with all the characters of the DCU, and have everyone play in a way and a form that feels both iconic and contemporary."

The deal involves more than just plump writing assignments: it turns out that Waid will play an editorial role similar to that announced for Geoff Johns and Grant Morrison (see CSN #943 for more info). "The fact that it's there, and will be a part of my contract in some form, was that what did it, and got me to sign this time," Waid told *Comic Shop Newsarama's* Matt Brady. "We're still hammering out the details of it, but we're looking at me keeping an eye on the A-level characters, and making sure there's a relatively consistent take on them across the books. Essentially without limiting the ability of writers to tell the stories they want to tell, or telling them what to write, I'll be doing something along the lines of making sure that, say, Jimmy Olsen remains consistent between his appearances in say, the *Superman* titles, *Firestorm*, and say, *Brave and the Bold*."

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Comic Shop Newsarama

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"It also allows me the opportunity to peel back the layers and dig down to find the essence of the characters. What do you find if you take the big characters and deconstruct them—in paper—and build them back up? The idea is then that we'll have something that we can use to explain who they are."

As to the aforementioned *almost* exclusivity: Waid's agreement with DC allows him to continue to write the *Marc Silvestri*-illustrated *Hunter-Killer* for Image/Top Cow, "as that's a creator-owned project, and the Top Cow guys have been really good to me," Waid said.

Readers who think of *Brave and the Bold* as a "Batman-and..." title may be surprised to hear that Batman will not be a star in every issue of the series. As Waid sees it, the new *Brave and the Bold* will be the classic format of B&B from years past. "Classic *Brave and the Bold* was not 'Batman and...' it became that once the television show picked up," Waid said. "In the earliest days of the *Brave and the Bold* it was Metal Men and the Atom, Flash and Martian Manhunter. Basically, what we're doing is that we're going to do it along the model of the very successful *Superman/Batman* book, in the sense that we'll do story arcs generally spelled by one or two shorter stories in between if the need suits."

"As complete stories, the ideas is to build in as many characters as possible, so it's not six issues of Batman and Green Arrow, for example—that would be a little predictable. The fun of it, of course, is finding the plot devices that would allow you to have, say, Batman and Green Lantern in issue #1, and then Green Lantern and, hypothetically speaking, Supergirl in issue #2, and Supergirl and Hawkman in issue #3, or whatever—and find the plot buttons, if you will, that you can hand off to keep the story going while moving the characters in and out as needed."

Or, to think of it in an animated way...*Brave and the Bold* is going to be a little along the lines of *Justice League Unlimited*, in that this is a world with a large number of heroes, and occasionally, the heroes join forces to combat a mutual threat, and in doing so, showcase a portion of the universe they all inhabit.

However, you can expect the Dark Knight to be a part of the book's launch. "I'd be foolish not to at least lead with Batman, because he is the first guy you think of when you think about *Brave and the Bold*. But that said, it can't be just another Batman book, and that's part of the joy of it—to move around. It's always going to be a tightrope walk between characters that we know will absolutely, positively goose the sales, and characters that may not be as hot, sales-wise at that moment, but regardless, are pretty interesting."

"We can't do Adam Strange and Metamorpho, for example. No one's going to buy that. But at the same time, I don't want to do Batman and Batman every month, either. So, there will probably be at least one strong anchor in every issue, somebody who has some marquee value, be it Batman or Superman, or whoever, and then we'll try to balance that with whoever is interesting. For example, if there's some reason Catman from Villains United is interest-

ing this month—well, maybe he can join with Superman for a story."

Waid said that he was also looking forward to some unexpected match-ups. "Part of the appeal of the series will be watching villains who don't normally face off against the heroes as well. For instance, Scarecrow versus Green Lantern. Also—part of the fun will be watching the worlds of the characters fold together. For me, it's not enough to see Batman and Captain Marvel together—I also want to see Alfred and Billy Batson... I want to see the whole mythologies merge together in their supporting casts."

"Clearly, the *post-Infinite Crisis* DCU is designed to be a much different landscape than what we've got now, and *Brave and the Bold* is designed specifically to be the place where we can explore that world to its fullest, more so than in *Justice League*, more so than in *Superman* or other DC Universe books—we can go anywhere and see everybody, and check in on the status quo of every character. This is your travelogue of the new DC Universe."

Marvel SDCC Newsbits

•Zeb Wells & Seth Fisher are working on a rather surreal-looking limited series, *Fantastic Four/Iron Man: Big in Japan*, which Marvel promises will deliver lots of monsters.

•*Daughters of the Dragon* joins the Marvel schedule as a four-part limited series in December, courtesy of writers Jimmy Palmiotti & Justin Gray and artist Khari Evans. Misty Knight & Colleen Wing will serve as bounty-hunters targeting the less high-profile supervillains of the Marvel Universe.

•Look for a surprise guest hero in *Marvel Team-Up #14* as Robert Kirkman unites Spider-Man and his Image Comics teen hero *Invisible* in a story drawn by original *Invisible* artist Corey Walker. Quesada said that, if this works, there may be more of this type of crossover in the future.

•J. Michael Straczynski joins with artist Colleen Doran for a new creator-owned project, *Book of Lost Souls*, which deals with a man whose attempt to commit suicide in 18th Century London lands him in the 21st Century, where he's charged with helping those who, like him, have reached the end of their figurative rope.

•*She-Hulk #100* is coming two months after the launch of *She-Hulk 2 #1*. (Yes, Marvel has calculated that this would be Jen's 100th issue if the numbering of the original series had continued through last year's *Dan Slott* maxiseries...)

•The New Thunderbolts face off against the New Avengers in *New Thunderbolts #13 & 14*.

•Frank Cho will drop in as guest artist for two issues of *New Avengers*, illustrating a story that spotlights Spider-Woman—and Cho is already working on another project to follow that run, although no one would reveal what it is.

•Publisher Dan Buckley reported that Joss Whedon & John Cassaday have committed to *Astonishing X-Men* through at least #25.

•A new *X-Statix* project is in the works, and Marvel expects to reveal more in the next month or so.



•The long, long awaited *Secret War* Book Five should be out this fall—most likely November—with a hardcover edition following in early 2006.

•Marvel is still keeping mum regarding Warren Ellis's team book, but they promise an announcement in about a month.

•Sean McKeever is working on another *Mary Jane* miniseries that should debut late this year.

•Look for Blade to make an appearance in the pages of *Black Panther* soon.

•Marvel's upcoming Spider-Man twelve-part storyline will run through all three monthly titles—*Amazing Spider-Man*, *Marvel Knights Spider-Man*, and the new *Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man* (by Peter David & Mike Wieringo). This story builds on the Spider-totems elements introduced by J. Michael Straczynski early in his *Amazing* run. Current plans call for JMS, Reggie Hudlin, and Peter David to each write all three titles for one month, and then for each to write his respective title in the fourth and final month of the twelve-part arc. While none of the writers was willing to give away too much of the storyline, Hudlin did say that his three-issue run ends with Peter losing a very important organ.

•Marvel will be collecting the various *Marvel Handbook* oneshots into trade paperbacks late this year or early next.

•Peter David has confirmed that he will be writing a new *X-Factor* series spinning out of events in his *Madrox* limited series as well as *House of M*. Debuting in November, the *Ryan Sook*-illustrated series will feature Jamie Madrox, Gregg G. Wolfesbane, and others. David described it as "Marvel's mutant universe meets the *X-Files*—but it's not going to be long and boring and without a point."

•Peter David confirmed that he will be leaving *Incredible Hulk* after contributing one post-*House of M* story arc. He cited a heavy workload that includes *X-Factor*, *Fallen Angel*, *Red Sonja*, and *Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man* (as well as FF and Wolverine novels for Simon & Schuster) as reasons for giving up the Hulk.

•When asked when Thor might be returning, Joe Quesada told the questioner that "you'll be a happy man in 2006."

•Quesada said that Reggie Hudlin's *X-Men/Black Panther* four-part series will help to lay the groundwork for 2006's major Marvel story event.

•*X-Men/Power Pack* is in the works for October release.

•Sean McKeever & Udon bring back *Sentinel* in November.

• Paul Jenkins continues to work on Marvel's upcoming *Mythos* projects, which dovetail cinematic and comic book continuity in a thought-provoking new way.



• **Ultimate Extinction**, the final limited series in Warren Ellis's *Ultimate* trilogy, is slated to premiere in December, with art by Brandon Peterson, who described it as vast and sweeping, including almost everyone in the Ultimate Universe. Not only does Ultimate Galactus continue to play a major part in the story, but the Ultimate version of Silver Surfer will also make an appearance—but he may not be what readers expect.

• **Ultimate X-Men** writer Brian K. Vaughan said that the upcoming Brian Singer *Ultimate X-Men* storyline would explore some of the X-Men ideas that he and screenwriter David Hayler were unable to work into the two X-Men films.

• Joe Quesada said that Marvel will address the discrepancies between the *Ultimate* versions of characters like the Fantastic Four and the Hulk that appeared in *Ultimate Marvel Team-Up* and the very different versions currently appearing in *Ultimate Fantastic Four* and *Ultimates 2*.



Comic Shop News



• At the end of his panel, Joe Quesada recalled being asked at last year's SDCC who his "dream writer" would be if he could enlist any big-name talent to produce a project for Marvel. Then, rather than answering his question, he showed a slide depicting a single word: King. Does that mean that Marvel has landed mega-selling author Stephen King, whose previous comics output has been limited to a page or so in the 1980's benefit book *Heroes for Hope*? Could be...

There's a Moon Knight on the Rise

After far too long an absence, Moon Knight is coming back to Marvel's monthly lineup—and he's bringing a high-profile writer with him!

Marvel editor-in-chief Joe Quesada confirmed that a new *Moon Knight* series is slated to debut in February 2006, illustrated by *New Avengers* artist David Finch and written by novelist Charlie Huston, best known for his crime novels *Caught Stealing* and *Six Bad Things*. His limited series focuses on Marc Spector, who is beginning to wonder if his time as a hero may be up.

"I've always been a huge fan of Doug Moench's original *Moon Knight* series," Huston said. "His dark themes tackled complicated issues and served up moral quandaries for the men and women in tights. I don't think it can be done any better than it was by Moench, but I will certainly try to do Moon Knight justice. One thing I will promise fans—it will be dark!"

"With Charlie's powerful storytelling and love of the original story, the new run not only will entertain long time Moon Knight fans, but also create a whole new audience of comic book readers," Quesada added.

Oni Reveals Colorful Plans

Oni Press, best known for a diverse array of black-and-white projects, revealed that they'll be exploring the wonderful world of color in 2006.

The Leading Man, a five-issue miniseries by B. Clay Moore & Jeremy Haun, is slated to debut next spring. The book's star is Nick Walker, who Moore describes as "The Man" in Hollywood. He's the hottest thing on film, and the most eligible bachelor in movies. Cover boy for *People*, *Premiere* and *GQ*, Nick's career is on the upswing and then some.

Unknown to his adoring public, Nick is also a master spy, directed by a secretly funded shadow agency, traveling around the world from location to location, carrying out

dangerous assignments in the dead of night.

"In this first story, Nick discovers he's not the only spy on set, and finds himself in the crosshairs of Code Black's master combat trainer, Colonel Hansford Maxwell, and his deadly Honor Students."

Moore said that the series will offer a look at society's obsession with beautiful celebrities who live in the land of professional make-believe.

Hollywood—but in this series, the Hollywood reality is itself a make-believe.

"Jeremy and I got such a great reception from Oni when we pitched the *Leading Man*, it didn't take us long to climb on board," said Moore. "And having the opportunity to do one of Oni's first color limited series was an honor."



Aria Ready for Looney Tunes Action Figures?

Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Sylvester, Tweety and other members of the Looney Tunes family of characters will soon be commemorated with an all-new *Looney Tunes Golden Collection Action Figure Series* from DC Direct.

The series will consist of authentic interpretations of the iconic characters as they originally appeared in the classic Looney Tunes animated shorts and television episodes. Slated for 2006 release, the series will pay tribute to longtime fan's favorite episodes including *The Scarlet Pumpernickel* and *What's Opera, Doc?* with action figures that come in episode-specific poses and costumes and packages that contain title cards, display environments and multiple accessories.

"DC Direct has helped our fans celebrate their favorite characters with magnificent sculptures for their shelves," Paul Levitz, President and Publisher of DC Comics, said. "It's exciting to be expanding our program to capture the magic moments of the Looney Tunes."

WildStorm Prepares for Atomic Reactions

Captain Atom may have been a casualty of the first *Superman/Batman* story arc... but he's getting better!

The nuclear hero will return in a very different place in *Captain Atom: Armageddon*, a nine-issue WildStorm miniseries by Will Pfeifer, Giuseppe Camuncoli, Sandra Hope, and cover artists Alex Ross & Jim Lee that debuts in October.

As Pfeifer told *Comic Shop News*, the series plays with, and expands the conceit of the character's origin—that is, Captain Atom can absorb energy, but if the volume of energy is high, said absorption comes with a cost—namely temporal displacement. Or, at least until now, the displacement was only temporal...

Armageddon begins at the end of the "Public Enemies" arc in *Superman/Batman*, which saw Captain Atom on a collision course with the kryptonite asteroid headed toward Earth. In his final moments, Atom reflected upon his life, and then...the hero's sacrifice. Captain Atom was gone, scattered, it was assumed, into bits smaller than his namesake. But heroes are hard to kill...

"Captain Atom isn't dead—but you knew that, didn't you?" Pfeifer said. "Instead, he's been transported to another universe. One where people live with super-heroes, but fear them more than anything else. After causing some chaos upon landing—well, actually crashing, Captain Atom tries to help out, but finds the local citizenry—and this is New York!—terrified of him."

"When he sees a figure soaring overhead, he breathes a sigh of relief, but realizes no, it's not a bird, it's not a plane, and it's not Superman. It's Majestic, and seeing that Captain Atom has apparently knocked down a city block, he logically—assumes he's up to no good, and they fight, causing quite a bit more property damage. After temporarily subduing Majestic, Captain Atom flies up, up and away and asks himself: 'Where the hell am I?'"

The answer, of course, is "The WildStorm Universe!" This is a world populated by superheroes—but their relationship with the general population is not at all like what Captain Atom has come to know in the DCU. But that's not the good Captain's biggest problem...



"Though no one knows this yet, Captain Atom was changed when he made the leap to the other universe. Changed by something that stretches back to the earliest days of the heroes who live there. And what changed him spells doom for the Wildstorm Universe. To get home -- if that's even possible -- Captain Atom is going to have to deal with other super-powered beings in the Wildstorm U. Majestic is just his beginning."

Pfeifer became involved with *Captain Atom* after writing a Jack Hawksmoor story for last year's *WildStorm Special*. "It was a story that involved parallel worlds, nasty violence and a twisted version of Walt Disney," Pfeifer said. "You know, all the classic elements of a comic book story. Editor Alex Sinclair liked it, so when he and the gang at Wildstorm came up with this *Captain Atom* idea, he gave me a call. Asked me if I wanted to write a miniseries full of super-heroes, colossal battles, worlds being born, worlds coming to an end..."

The storyline has nothing to do with Majestic's recent trip to the DCU -- though. As Pfeifer explained, it's all about Captain Atom punching a hole through realities. "That being said, Majestic does realize who Captain Atom is -- but not at first, which gives us a chance for one of those classic mistaken identity battles," Pfeifer said. "We use that battle though -- a comic book cliché, to be sure -- to point out the different between the friendly confines of the DCU and the, er, wilder, stormier situation in the Wildstorm Universe. When these two heroes battle, it's not in some condemned neighborhood. It's in the middle of a heavily populated area, and only Captain Atom seems overly concerned about collateral damage."

As for what was changed in Captain Atom when he came over -- well, Pfeifer's staying mum on the specifics, but did offer some teasers. "It's something that has been part of that universe for a long, long time -- since the first pages of one of the first books that became a cornerstone of the Wildstorm world -- how's that for a tease? What that little bit of something does is upset the delicate balance holding Captain Atom together, atomically speaking. And, being that he's in a new universe -- one he's not really a part of, and one that conflicts with him on a sub-atomic level -- this bit of imbalance could spell big trouble. For everything."

Could that trouble relate to the *Armageddon* in the miniseries' title? "Well, now that would be telling, wouldn't it?" Pfeifer said

As astute readers may have noted Captain Atom's appearance in the first installment of the latest *Superman/Batman* arc; Pfeifer explains how that's possible. "Yes, Cap does come back in *Superman/Batman*, making a brief appearance in a recent issue. But that scene takes place before *Captain Atom: Armageddon*. When you're dealing with a guy like Captain Atom -- a guy whose origin involves him leaping decades ahead in time -- then you've got someone who's accustomed to some time slips and parallel moments. Makes the continuity both challenging and easily repaired. That means, of course, that his appearance in *Superman/Batman* in no way guarantees his safe return. Or anyone else's."

And to further clarify, the WildStorm Universe Captain Atom enters is the current version. "It's the one with the newest versions of the Wildcats and the rest of the gang over there," Pfeifer said. "It's going to dovetail with current continuity and, by the end of the series, send that continuity spinning off in new directions."

For Pfeifer, the opportunity to tell a universe-threatening story is particularly rewarding. "I've never had the chance to play on a really cosmic playground before, comic-book-writing wise. You're talking to a kid who was raised on the Dark Phoenix saga, *Crisis on Infinite Earths* and all those trippy Jim Starlin comic books. I wanted to take my own crack at that sort of epic tale. My favorite part of writing comic books is finding the little human moments in super-human stories, and now I've got a big canvas -- I mean a *really* big canvas -- to play against."



Dark Horse SDCC Newsbits

- Dark Horse continues Masamune Shirow's SF saga in the spring of 2006 with *Ghost in the Shell 1.5: Human-Error Processor*, a series of stories originally serialized as part of *Ghost in the Shell 2* but not included by Shirow in the *Ghost in the Shell 2: Man-Machine Interface* collection.
- Bob Fingerman pits kids against zombies in *Recess Pieces*, a 6" x 8" eighty-page original hardcover graphic novel debuting in July 2006. When everyone above puberty turns zombie, it's up to the kids to save humanity.
- V for Vendetta co-creator David Lloyd turns his attention to edgy crime noir with *The Kickback*, a 96-page hardcover graphic novel set for 2006 release.
- As CSN told you two issues ago, Todd Dezago & Craig Rousseau bring their paranormal superteam *The Perhapanauts* to Dark Horse later this year in an original four-issue limited series.



- *Eden Volume One: It's an Endless World*, a post-apocalyptic cyberpunk human interest drama, is slated for release in November.
- *Dracula Book One: Asylum*, the first in a series of prose novels based on the classic Universal Monsters characters, debuts in December. Set in WWII, the novel brings Dracula back to the Seward Sanitarium in a bid to dominate the world.
- *Scarface*, the first of two original Scarface prose novels that begin in the years before Tony Montana's arrival in America in the 1980s, also debuts in December.
- *Penny Arcade*, the online comic by gamers for gamers, earns its first print collection in December.
- *Gungrave Anime Manga*, an adaptation of Yasuhiro Nightow's series, debuts in early 2006.
- *Reiko the Zombie Shop*, the story of a necromancer who is hired to bring folks back from the dead, debuts in December.
- *The Gremlins*, Roald Dahl's long-unavailable tale featuring art by talented illustrators from Walt Disney Studios, is reissued in early 2006; the reissue will be followed by an all-new three-issue *Gremlins* limited series based on Dahl's characters.

Universal Adapter

The Universe will soon be Jay Faerber's. Or at least Captain Universe will be. Captain Universe, the story of a hero who could be anyone, will rejoin the Marvel Universe in October in a pair of backup stories in *Amazing Fantasy* #s 13 & 14.

In case you don't know this everyman hero, here's Faerber's explanation. "Captain Universe can be anyone -- literally. In times of crisis, an individual will be granted them vast powers, along with the Captain Universe costume -- and the inherent knowledge of this identity, and how to use the powers. Once the crisis has been overcome, the powers will vanish."

"In the past, the powers have included superhuman strength, flight, energy blasts, a weird hypnotic vision -- you know, the deluxe package," Faerber continued. "Who -- or what -- grants these powers, and why, and where they come from, well, that's part of the story."

Faerber credits editor Mark Paniccia with putting him and Captain Universe together. "I'd been corresponding with Mark since he was at TokyoPop, about doing something together... One day, he just shot me an email, asking what I thought about Captain Universe. He already had an overall plan in mind, since this project is more than just a couple extra-pagers. So, he sent me the rough outline, and we started expanding on it from there, each building on what the other contributed."

"For me, the Captain Universe concept, more than any other, really lends itself to complete reinvention. The basic premise is built on constantly reinventing itself, so I find that challenging. And, through this project, we'll be taking that reinvention to another level, as you'll eventually see."

Faerber shared some of Paniccia's overall plan. "We're doing two back-ups in *Amazing Fantasy*, which basically reintroduce the concept of Captain Universe ... and then pull the rug out from under it. It's great for people who've never been exposed to the character, because we lay it all out there for you. For those die-hard Marvel fans who remember Captain Universe, these back-ups will look at things with fresh eyes -- you'll be seeing stuff you never knew about the concept."

"But then, these two back-ups are just the beginning. From there, we go on to a much larger *Captain Universe* 'event.' It's big, and it's going to really take advantage of the Marvel landscape -- both the big-name, crowd-pleasing Marvel heroes, as well as some of the lesser-known characters who maybe haven't gotten as much attention lately as they deserve. I think it's too soon to go into great detail about exactly what form this storyline is going to take, but suffice it to say that I'm having a blast playing in some new corners of the Marvel Universe that I've never explored before."



Oni SDCC News

- Chynna Clugston invites *Strangetown* beginning in created with Ian Shaughnessy woman who lives in -- we "Strangetown is full of odd by an unspoken similarity Clugston said. "It's a place and be accepted without think they're strange in the seem completely unaware continue to function in the nothing is off-kilter. We m eyes, as she studies them, might."
- *The Damned*, a horror-c Bunn & Brian Hurtt, debu combines prohibition-era ural.
- Brian Wood & Ryan Kelly extraordinary, life-changing twelve-issue series that w alone stories. Look for the



etown



Newsbits

readers to visit November. The series, co-ssy, is the story of a young ill, the title says it all. characters, bound together y of disposition and habits, e where any oddball can go hesitation, not that they e slightest. Actually, they e that they are different and eir day-to-day lives as if e meet them through Vanora's as a scientist or writer

ime amalgam by Cullen ts next spring. The series mobsters and the supernat-

spotlight normal people in g situations in *Local*, a ill present a dozen stand- y first issue in November.

RYAN KELLY
LOCAL
Thoughts Per Hour



#1

• **Antony Johnston & Chris Mitten**, creators of *Queen & Country: Declassified III*, reunite to take readers to the *Wasteland*. Set in a devastated America, this ongoing series looks at life after the "Big Wet," a catastrophe that brought the seas inland, washing away the cities and forging a new world map. New civilizations and religions have sprung up in the hundred years since the mysterious disaster, as mankind struggles back to its feet. Some say the answers to all the questions can be found at A-Ree-Yass-I, the fabled land where mankind's downfall began. But everyone knows A-Ree-Yass-I is just a myth... isn't it?

TokyoPop SDCC Newsbits

• The Jim Henson Company is joining with TokyoPop to produce manga versions of three of its fantasy titles. Most notable among them is a Neil Gaiman-plotted prequel to *MirrorMask*, the feature film from *Dave McKean & Gaiman* due for release this fall. The *MirrorMask* prequel will tell the story of the princess' escape from the Dark Palace and how she came to acquire the *MirrorMask*. Also in the works is a sequel to *Labyrinth* and a prequel to *The Dark Crystal*. "As soon as I heard that Henson wanted to do manga versions of *Labyrinth* and *The Dark Crystal*, I immediately wanted to include *MirrorMask* as well," Gaiman said. "Having the leader of manga handle all three titles seems like the perfect way to present them to readers around the world."

• TokyoPop has announced plans to produce a series of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer Cine-Manga* volumes, beginning with *Buffy's* one hundredth episode, "The Gift." The cine-manga format combines screen-capture images with comics-style word balloons. The cine-manga adaptation will be accompanied by never-before-seen behind-the-scenes photos, director and actor commentary, excerpts from the uncut script, and more.

• New additions to TokyoPop's line of manga include *Steady Beat*, a shojo series by *Riokah*; *Midnight Opera*, a goth-rock horror-fantasy by *Harizo Steinbach* (A Syrian-born artist of German heritage); and *Psy-Comm*, an original science fiction series by *Jason Henderson*, *Tony Salvaggio*, & *Shane Granger* focusing on a future in which war is entertainment and genetically altered combatants are treated like celebrities.

Willingham Re-Ups

Eisner Award-winner **Bill Willingham**, writer of *Fables*, *Robin*, and *Day of Vengeance*, has signed a two-year extension of his exclusive with DC. "As a second-timer I now get access to the super-secret DC deluxe executive washroom, spa and hot-tub fiesta room," Willingham said. "Yes, I still have to occasionally sweep up around the DC offices, but I hear that goes away with the third exclusive renewal. But seriously, I'll be continuing *Fables* while also starting a number of exciting new projects—including an expansion of the *Fables* universe. Then there are all the terrific new things going on in the DCU. It's going to continue to be a joy to work with DC during one of the most exciting and innovative periods in its publishing history."

Fans of Willingham's *Fables* will be pleased to hear that the franchise is expanding to include a second ongoing title as well as an original graphic novel. "It's going to be published in hardback and I think coming in at about 144 pages," Willingham told *Comic Shop News*. "So it is similar in size and look to the *Sandman: Endless Nights* graphic novel. It's title is *1001 Nights of Snowfall*."

"It's been in the plans for quite some time, but those really snitty DC people insisted that they couldn't publish the thing until I finished writing it, and that kind of backwards thinking... I just don't know," Willingham joked. "So, I did finish writing it. I couldn't go through another San Diego show feeling the guilt from not finishing it, so I did finish it and now because of that they are willing to talk

about it more like this actually going to happen."

As the title suggests, the book is a collection of stories, akin somewhat to *1001 Arabian Nights*, the legendary collection of stories Scheherazade told the Sultan to prevent him from beheading her. This time, it's Snow telling the stories after she was sent to the land of the Arabian Fables. "In a similar sort of parallel sort of thing we have Snow telling stories, Snow White, then the stories that she tells are the comic book illustrated stories that appear in this volume," Willingham said. "Each illustrated by a different artist. They're all going to be stories about characters that we know and love—or at least know—in the *Fables* series... stories about them back in the homelands." Artists include *Charles Vess*, *Jean Jean*, *Mark Buckingham*, and *Mark Wheatley*.

The new series, *Jack of Fables*, picks up after Jack went Hollywood in the recent two-part story. "Jack made three big, blockbuster movies *ala Lord of the Rings* for the specific purpose of making himself the most well-known, popular Fable—and by the current theory the more popular you are with the Mundy's, the more power you have personally, the less vulnerable you are, the more able you are to recover from damage, that type of thing."

"Of course it all falls apart and the last we saw is that Jack has a suitcase full of what little money the Fable Town folk would let him take with his thumb out and of course the last line in that is true to his word Jack was never seen in Fable Town again. So the *Jack of Fables* series takes off literally one second after that scene, Jack on the road with his thumb out and we see what happens with him from then on, what crazy thing happens with the very first vehicle that pulls over to give him a ride."

For Willingham, who will be joined on the series by co-writer *Matthew Sturges* and artist *Tony Akins*, the idea of basing a whole series on Jack was too compelling to put on the shelf. "He's a womanizer, but not as good at it as Prince Charming was," Willingham said. "He's always up to schemes and things, but wasn't as good at it as someone like Bluebeard... He's a kind of a leading man, but not really as much of a leading man as some of the other characters... So he was definitely the 'almost second best at everything' type of character..."



DC SDCC Newsbits

• *Infinite Crisis* launches in October, courtesy of *Geoff Johns*, *Phil Jimenez*, & *Andy Lanning*, with alternate covers by *Jim Lee* & *Sandra Hope* and *George Pérez*. The series begins with the dawn of the DCU's darkest day, as the World's Greatest Super-Heroes are divided among themselves and surrounded by their most fearsome foes. As a part of this storyline, DC will take every DCU title "One Year Later" in conjunction with the release of *Infinite Crisis* #5.



• **Matt Wagner** revisits the world of the Dark Knight with November's *Batman and the Monster Men*.

The story begins as the Dark Knight Detective battles a legion of horrors created by the notorious Professor Hugo Strange. This series will be followed up by a second series, *Batman and the Mad Monk*. The titles for the two series are drawn from classic Golden Age stories, and Wagner explained that the two books would chronicle how Batman graduated from fighting organized crime to combating monsters, mad scientists, and strange creatures.

• The Fearsome Five return in *Outsiders* #29—and this time, they've got a new recruit whose power is beyond belief, and whose very presence increases the danger to the magical realms of the DCU.

• *Grant Morrison's Seven Soldiers* rollout continues in October with the debut of two new series—*Seven Soldiers: Frankenstein* (illustrated by *Doug Mahnke*) and *Seven Soldiers: Bulletree* (illustrated by *Yanick Paquette & Karl Story*).

• **Jonah Hex** rejoins the DC lineup in November in a new, darkly realistic Western series by *Jimmy Palmiotti*, *Justin Gray*, & *Luke Ross*, with covers by such luminaries as *Frank Quitely* and *Phil Noto*. "We're handling the book in classic western style," Palmiotti said. "He's mean, he's ugly, and there's lots of blood and nasty stuff going on..."

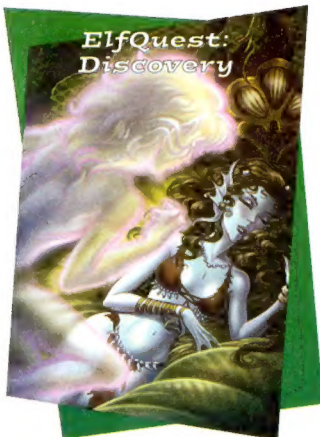
DC also plans to do a black and white *DC Showcase* compilation of early *Jonah Hex* stories.

• *Bruce Jones & Bart Sears' Warlord* launches in January 2006.

• **Paul Pope** writes and illustrates *Batman: Year 100*, a four-issue prestige-format series set in the year 2039. In a city overrun by technology, Batman's legacy lives on — but federal police agents believe he's a murderer, and they're out to stop him at any cost. Look for it in 2006.



ElfQuest: Discovery



•Wendy & Richard Pini are working on a new *ElfQuest* limited series, *ElfQuest: Discovery*, for 2006. The underwater society of the Wave Dancers had been hidden from land-dwellers for untold ages... until Cutter's son emerges from his deep sleep feeling compelled to find his lifemate, who happens to be one of the Wave Dancers.

•Comics legend Joe Kubert re-enlists in Easy Company for a new six-part limited series, *Sgt. Rock: The Prophecy*, which debuts in January. Kubert is both writing and illustrating this series.

•The Man of Steel is the second hero to earn a comprehensive chronological trade paperback reprint series. *Superman Chronicles*, debuting in 2006, will collect Superman's earliest appearances in the order in which they originally appeared.

•Tom Fontana, creator and head writer of HBO's *Oz* and co-creator of *Homicide: Life on the Streets*, makes his comics debut with the original graphic novel *Batman: Hopelessness & Faith*. Illustrated by Cliff Chiang, the story shows what happens when Batman learns the hard way how his actions are enabling some of his greatest foes.

•All Star Superman is slated to make its debut in November, courtesy of Grant Morrison & Frank Quitely. The first issue is already completed, and the script is in for the second issue, so readers won't have that much longer to wait!

•Greg Rucka stressed the importance of the four-part *Superman/Batman/Wonder Woman* "Sacrifice" story arc to the *OMAC Project* storyline and to DC continuity. "This storyline will absolutely, radically change the relationships of characters in the DCU," he said.

OMAC Project



•Greg Rucka said he will soon address the issue of who shot Lois Lane, while writer Mark Verheiden said he has an upcoming story exploring the Lois/Superman relationship that also touches on her shooting. The storyline also addresses what would Superman do to make sure that never happened again.

•Mxyzptlk will probably come back in *Adventures of Superman #646*, and that will be an end to that storyline.

•Asked since Lex Luthor knew Clark was Superman but had his memory scrubbed, would he start to remember that as that seems to be the current DCU trend, Jeph Loeb said that he'll be resolving the Lex story and other stories that play out of it in *Superman/Batman*.

•Asked if Dave Gibbons & Patrick Gleason's *Green Lantern Corps: Recharge* limited series will lead to an ongoing *Corps* series, Tomasi said there's a good chance if sales are strong.

•Hal Jordan and the Green Lantern Corps play a significant role in *Infinite Crisis*, and there will also be significant changes in the *Green Lantern* series when the books jump ahead "One Year Later" next spring.

Green Lantern



•The re-formed Green Lantern Corps will have 2 members per sector; John Stewart is Hal Jordan's fellow GL on Earth (and it's likely that John Stewart will have an expanded role in *JLA* after the current storyline wraps up). The expansion comes about because the Corps is a sort of cosmic police force, and like any police force, they sometimes need backup.

•Geoff Johns hinted that *Infinite Crisis* would answer questions regarding a new human host for the Spectre.

•Geoff Johns said that readers would see a membership changeup following *Infinite Crisis*. Prior to that though, Red Hood appears in issue #29, Nightwing in #31-#32, and new characters will come in after that. Johns added that the Doom Patrol will appear shortly as well. As a final tease, Johns said, "We'll see Titans East eventually, too" though it was unclear if he was talking about an appearance of the offshoot team in the ongoing series, or the new team starring in their own series.



Vertigo/DC SDCC Newsbits

•Harvey Pekar & Dean Haspiel bring a bit of *American Splendor* to Vertigo in October with the release of *The Quitter*, which tells the story of Pekar's troubled adolescence.

•Brian K. Vaughan & Niko Henrichon follow a family of an escaped pride of lions who must find a way to stay together and avoid man's war in *Pride of Baghdad*, an original graphic novel debuting in 2006.

•Rick Veitch's *Can't Get No*, an original graphic novel slated for 2006 release, introduces businessman Chad Roe, who finds himself a marked man—literally! To be more precise, he awakens to discover that he has been marked from head to toe with super-indelible, permanent ink of his own invention. Now a freakish outsider, Chad ventures out on a cross-country odyssey into a world where the rules of "civilization" no longer apply.

•Brian Azzarello & Marcelo Frusin take readers back to the Old West in *Loveless*, an ongoing series that combines all the bloody action and atmosphere of a Sergio Leone film with the provocative storytelling of HBO's *Deadwood*.

•Brian Wood & Riccardo Burchielli take readers into the demilitarized zone that is New York City in *DMZ*, a new monthly series coming in December. *DMZ* takes place in the near future, following a blood civil war begun by state militia groups. In the midst of this, veteran reporter Matty Roth finds himself stranded in Manhattan, armed only with his camera and his wits.



•Steven T. Seagle takes a look at sex, violence and morality in *American Virgin*, a new monthly series premiering next spring.

Illustrated by Becky Cloonan, *American Virgin* stars Adam Chamberlain, a successful young man whose religious beliefs have led him to remain a virgin until he's married... until his fiancée is brutally murdered, throwing Adam's every belief into question.

•There's a very different *Deadman* on the way, courtesy of Bruce Jones & John Watkiss. Airline pilot Brandon Cayce thought he was having a bad day when his plane went down in a fiery wreck at Heathrow Airport. But it was all downhill from here...

•In *Sloth*, Gilbert Hernandez focuses on a teenager who escapes from his life by willing himself into a yearlong coma—and when he

Sloth



awakens, he can only move at a snail's pace.

•At the boundary between orderly society and chaotic nature stand *The Exterminators*. In this new ongoing monthly series by Simon Oliver & Tony Moore, a new member of a Los Angeles-based pest-control firm begins to see the world from a bug's eye view, as he comes to understand that insects are truly Earth's dominant life force.

•Howard Chaykin, David Tischman, & David Hahn revisit vampiric Miami in *Bite Club: Vampire Crime Unit*, a new five-issue limited series. Detective Michael Fortine, head of the elite Vampire Crime Unit, deals exclusively with homicide and sex crimes by and against vampires—especially those committed by the Del Toro crime family.

•Richard Corben returns to the muck in *Swamp Thing #20*, as the Swamp Thing attempts to escape reality by creating smaller and smaller versions of himself, until he reaches a subatomic universe, where he encounters, of all people, John Constantine.

•Crime novelist Denise Mina takes over as writer of John Constantine's saga beginning with *Hellblazer #216*.

•Darren Aronofsky, renowned for his films *Pi* and *Requiem for a Dream*, teams with painter Kent Williams for the original graphic novel *The Fountain*, which ties in with the film that Aronofsky is completing for New Regency & Warner Bros. Crisscrossing through three time eras, *The Fountain* follows a passionate young man's attempts to beat death and prolong the life of the woman he loves.



WildStorm/DC SDCC Newsbits

- Chuck Dixon, Doug Mahnke, & Sandra Hope resurrect another classic WildStorm name with **Team Zero**, an edgy series set in WWII that features the original agent codenamed Deathblow, who's been put in charge of a seven-man team on a mission into the heart of the Germany.
- The **Ninja Boy** team of Allen Warner & Alé Garza reteam next year for **Skye Runner**, a six-issue miniseries. In an age of tyrannical gods and powerful giants, young Azadeh dreams of following her warrior spirit and exploring the world, but is stuck at home... until a horde of monsters kidnaps her niece and nephew, forcing her to take action in a world that's far bigger than she ever imagined.
- **Robotech** flies again in October, courtesy of Tommy Yune, Jason Waltrip, John Waltrip, Omar Dogan, & Udon Studios. After 20 years, the mysterious circumstances behind the disappearance of Admiral Rick Hunter will be revealed in this five-issue miniseries featuring the original Robotech cast.



CMX/DC SDCC Newsbits

- Japan's top manga creator, **Tanemura Arina**, comes to CMX with the international best-seller **Kamikaze Kaito Jeanne**, beginning in October! As the reincarnation of Joan of Arc, Kusakabe Maron steals demon-possessed paintings and neutralizes their evil in this fast-paced high-concept series.
- Cartoon Network's hit series comes to comics, courtesy of CMX, in **Kikaider Code 02** by Ishinomori Shotarō & Meimu. On the surface, Jiro seems to be an average teenager—but he's really a super-powered android called Kikaider.

Apparat 2 Rescheduled

Warren Ellis has announced in his e-mail newsletter that the upcoming Apparat 2 line from Avatar won't see print until next year. "I've decided to push the Apparat 2 launch back to February 2006," Ellis wrote. "My 38th birthday, ha ha. This summer's looking busy, and I don't want to kill myself the way I did last year. And, for some reason, 2005 doesn't feel quite right for these books. It's hard to put into words. Just a sense that I should save it for next year..."

"Additionally, I've been on a promise for years to give Avatar an actual commercial project, so I think I'll take care of that next. I sat there one night thinking, 'they call this pisswater 'grim and gritty' y' I'll show them grim and gritty. I'll show them all!'"

Disney SDCC Newsbits

- Disney Children's Book Group VP & Editor-in-Chief **Brenda Bowen** shared what may be disappointing news with the many fans of J.M. DeMatteis & Mike Ploog's acclaimed and short-lived **Abadazad** series: while the company will bring the property back in a series of four 160-page illustrated novels, they will not relaunch it as a comic book. Disney actually purchased the assets of the bankrupt CrossGen to acquire the rights to **Abadazad**, and that they have no current publishing plans involving other CrossGen properties.
- Slave Labor / Amaze Ink publisher **Dan Vado** has creative teams hard at work on their comics based on four Disney licensed properties—**Haunted Mansion**, **WonderLand**, **Tron**, and **Gargoyles**. **Haunted Mansion** will be an anthology series; **WonderLand** will be produced by Tommy Kovak & Sonny Liew; **Gargoyles**, by Greg Weisman with art direction by Greg Guler; and **Tron**, by Landy Walker & Greg Jones.

Eisner Winners Named

The 17th Annual Eisner Award winners were named at the recent San Diego Comic-Con. Those winners include:

Best Humor Publication

The Goon; Eric Powell (Dark Horse)

Best Publication for a Younger Audience

Plastic Man; Kyle Baker & Scott Morse (DC)

Best Anthology

Michael Chabon Presents The Amazing Adventures of the Escapist; Diana Schutz & David Lané, editors (Dark Horse)

Best Coloring

Dave Stewart; *Daredevil*, *Ultimate X-Men*, *Ultimate Six*, *Captain America* (Marvel); *Conan*, *BPRD* (Dark Horse); DC: *The New Frontier* (DC)

Best Lettering

Todd Klein; *Promethea*, *Tom Strong*, *Tom Strong's Terrific Tales* (ABC/DC); *Wonder Woman* (DC); *Books of Magic: Life During Wartime*, *Fables*, *WE3* (Vertigo/DC); *Creatures of the Night* (Dark Horse)

Talent Deserving of Wider Recognition

Sean McKeever, *A Waiting Place* (SLG); Mary Jane, *Inhumans*, *Sentinels* (Marvel)

Best Digital Comic

Mom's Cancer; Brian Fies

Best US Edition of Foreign Material

Buddha Vols 3 & 4; Osamu Tezuka (Vertical)

Best Publication Design

The Complete Peanuts; Seth (Fantagraphics)

Best Penciller/Inker or Penciller/Inker Team

TIE *John Cassaday*; *Astonishing X-Men* (Marvel); *Planetary* (WildStorm/DC), *I Am Legion: The Dancing Faun* (Humanoids/DC); and *Frank Quitely*, *WE3*. (Vertigo/DC)

Best Painter Multimedia

Artist (interior art)
Teddy Kristiansen; *It's a Bird...* (Vertigo/DC)

Best Cover Artist

James Jean; *Fables* (Vertigo/DC), *Green Arrow*, *Batgirl* (DC)

Best Comics-Related Periodical

Comic Book Artist; Jon B Cooke, editor (Top Shelf).

Best Comics-Related Book

Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters and the Birth of the Comic Book; Gerard Jones (Basic)

Best Archival Collection/Project

The Complete Peanuts; Gary Groth, editor (Fantagraphics)

Best Graphic Album-- Reprint

Bone One Volume Edition; Jeff Smith (Cartoon).

Best Graphic Album-- New:

The Originals; Dave Gibbons. (Vertigo/DC)

Best Writer:

Brian K Vaughn; *Y—The Last Man* (Vertigo/DC), *Ex Machina* (WildStorm/DC), *Runaways* (Marvel).

Best Writer/Artist-- Humor

Kyle Baker; *Plastic Man* (DC), *Kyle Baker: Cartoonist* (Baker)

Best Writer/Artist:

Paul Chadwick; *Concrete—The Human Dilemma* (Dark Horse)

Best Short Story:

"Unfamiliar;" Evan Dorkin & Jill Thompson. in *The Dark Horse Book of Witchcraft* (Dark Horse)

Best Serialized Story

Fables #s 19-27, "March of the Wooden Soldiers"; Bill Willingham, Mark Buckingham, & Steve Leialoha (Vertigo/DC)

Best Single Issue/ One Shot

Eighthball #23; Dan Clowes (Fantagraphics)

Best New Series

Ex Machina, Brian K Vaughn, Tony Harris, & Tom Feister (WildStorm/DC)

Best Limited Series

DC: *The New Frontier*; Darwyn Cooke (DC)

Best Continuing Series:

The Goon; Eric Powell (Dark Horse)

Hall of Fame

Lou Fine (Judge's selection)
Rene Goscinny (Judge's selection)
Albert Uderzo (Judge's selection)
Nick Cardy
Gene Colan
Johnny Craig
Hugo Pratt.

Other awards presented during the Eisner ceremonies include:

Will Eisner Spirit of Comics Retailer Award

Night Flight Comics Salt Lake City, UT

CBLDF Defender of Freedom Award

Denis Kitchen

Bill Finger Excellence in Comics Writing Award

Jerry Siegel & Arnold Drake

Russ Manning Most Promising Newcomer Award:

Chris Bailey; *Major Damage*. (Sky Dog)

Bob Clampett Humanitarian Award:

George Pérez.

Free Thinking

If you miss **Free Comic Book Day 2006**, you can't say it was because you didn't hear about it in time! The FCBD committee met at the San Diego Comic-Con and set May 6, 2006, as the date for next year's Free Comic Book Day. As was the case in 2005, this will be a "free-standing" celebration of comics scheduled without a comic-book-movie tie-in—although any studios who'd like to take advantage of the publicity are free to reschedule their comic book films to debut on that weekend, of course!

GARTH ENNIS CARLOS EZQUERRA

THE AUTHORITY

THE MAGNIFICENT KEVIN

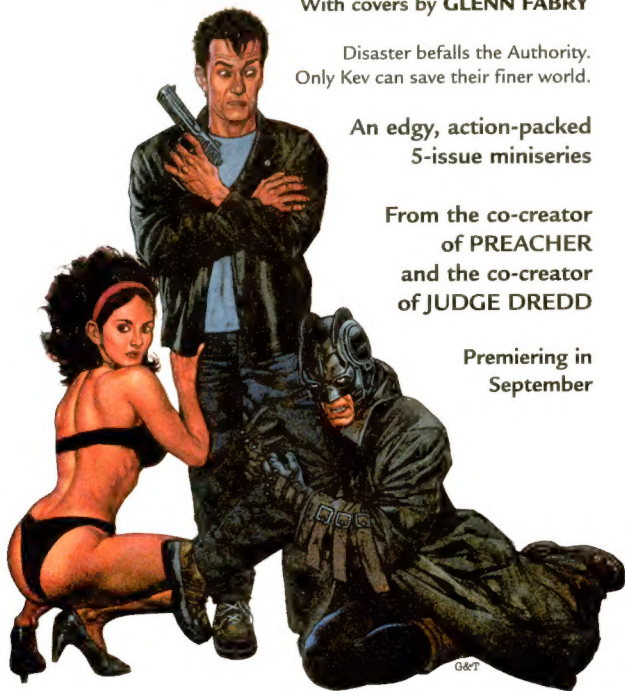
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